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S E C R E T SANAA 000393

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/16/2012

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [YM](#) [COUNTER](#) [TERRORISM](#) [MARITIME](#) [SECURITY](#) [TERFIN](#)

SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR SANAA VISIT

Classified By: Charge Alan G. Misenheimer for reasons 1.5 (a), (d).

11. (U) Embassy Sanaa warmly welcomes the visit of GEN Abizaid and his staff. You will find that operational counterterrorism cooperation between the USG and the ROYG has increased since your last visit.

12. (SBU) The grant transfer patrol boats for the Yemen Coast Guard arrived on 15 February and we are now in the process of getting them operational and training the Yemen Coast Guard in their operation and war-fighting techniques. The Yemenis plan a gala inaugural event for the YCG boats in mid-March, and we will help the ROYG use that event to boost other donor support for the YCG.

13. (C) Through SOCE-Yemen we have extended our reach beyond Sanaa by conducting MTTs in outlying areas such as Marib, Mukalla, Aden, and Hodeidah. These MTTs enhance the credibility of in-country CT cooperation, as we help the Yemenis project a visible and increasingly capable presence in areas where the terrorists have operated and/or found safehaven in the past.

14. (C) The USOMC has allocated all its FMF grant monies through FY03 and has a viable plan for the FY04 allocation of \$14.9M once the allocation is formalized. We are working through export license issues with the State Department, and the recent Bloomfield memo should alleviate prior approval problems. The Yemen MOD still does not have an authorized freight forwarder under contract despite spending \$500K already for a non-authorized shipper. Under U.S. law, Yemen is responsible for providing transportation for its FMF buys. The USOMC and myself have been involved in this issue on a daily basis with the Yemen MOD.

15. (C) Yemen's regional policy is currently focused on Saudi Arabia. Saleh is visiting the KSA this week to discuss the bilateral contretemps over Saudi construction of sand and concrete barriers along several stretches of the shared border. The 2000 Jeddah Agreement ended decades of wrangling by demarcating the border, but the current dispute -- which hinges on the ROYG complaint that KSA has violated the Agreement by building within an agreed 20km "no-construction" zone -- has opened up old wounds. This is significant, since bilateral cooperation to close the border to smuggling and terrorist infiltration is key to security of both KSA and the Gulf states.

16. (S) FM Qirbi's recent U.S. visit was mostly upbeat, and yielded Yemeni agreement to permit U.S. teams to come (timing TBD) and interrogate al-Qaida detainees here. On the other hand, the ROYG is resisting U.S. plans to freeze the assets of prominent Yemeni Sheikh Abdulmajid al-Zindani for terrorist financing. Ramifications of this issue are not yet clear; but the overall bilateral relationship, especially CT cooperation, is on a positive footing.

17. (C) There are still threats in Yemen; but Yemeni security services have been prompt and effective in responding to security issues (including active threats) and the overall threat level continues to decline thanks to U.S.-Yemeni security cooperation. Embassy planning for coming FYs is shifting toward greater emphasis on development assistance, especially in outlying areas where al-Qaida has been active in the past. We are working with CJTF-HOA on a civil military opns program that will complement this positive evolution in U.S. engagement, even as we also focus on sustaining the effective CT engagement established over the past two years.

18. (C) Your meeting with Saleh will afford an important opportunity to update his knowledge of the mutually beneficial U.S. military engagement with Yemen and -- importantly -- to reinforce his personal relationship with you. Again, we are truly looking forward to your visit.

MISENHEIMER